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Message Text

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46
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 PRS-01 PA-01 SS-15 PPT-01 SCA-01

SCS-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 BIB-01 /050 W
---------- 070953
R 271445Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9693
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0515

USIA FOR IEU, IBS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, CZ
SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS' VISAS

REF: STATE 041701

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES REASONING IN REFTEL. IN ACCORDANCE WITH IT, WE HAVE NOTIFIED MFA THAT TILL'S VISA IS READY.

2. AS REGARDS SEEGER, PAO IN CONVERSATION WITH KADNAR (HEAD PRESS SECTION) FOUND THAT VISA APPROVAL SENT TO BLEGRADE RATHER THAN BONN IN ERROR. THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN CORRECTED BY NOW. WOULD APPRECIATE BONN'S ASCERTAINING IF SEEGER GOT HIS VISA.

3. WE UNDERSTAND BOTH DUSKO DODER (WASHPOST) AND MALCOLM BROWNE (NYT) HAVE RECEIVED VISAS TO COVER KSC CONGRESS IN APRIL, AND HENRY MILLER OF TIME DUE HERE NEXT WEEK. IT LOOKS RIGH NOW AS IF GOC IS TAKING A FAIRLY GOOD ATTITUDE TOWARDS US JOURNALISTS' VISAS IN GENERAL.

4. REMAINING ISSUE IS GETTING VOA CORRESPONDENT IN. THERE
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ARE TWO QUESTIONS, WHETHER TO PUT "OVA" IN SOME FORM ON VISA

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APPLICATION, AND WHETHER TO PUT SOME SPECIFIC EVENT ON APPLICATION. WE REFER TO PARA 5 (A) OF PRAGUE 3018 (NOV. 28, 1975) IN WHICH WE RECOMMENDED THAT WE TELL MFA THAT NEW FREUND APPLICATION WOULD STATE "USIA (VOA)" AND THAT "FREUND WOULD WRITE SEVERAL STORIES FROM PRAGUE." IN OUR TALKS WITH MFA OFFICIALS, WE HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED THE POSITION THAT VOA MAN, EVEN IF HE APPLIED FOR VISA TO COVER SPECIFIC EVENT, WOULD COVER OTHER STORIES AS WELL. WE BELIEVE THIS TO BE ENTIRELY DEFENSIBLE POSITION, AND IS ACCEPTED BY GOC. FRANKLY, WE THINK MAJOR HURDLE HERE IS THE VISA APPLICATION ITSELF, NOT WHAT THE MAN COVERS, AND DO NO ANTICIPATE MAJOR PROBLEM IN THIS AREA.

5. WITH REGARD TO LISTING "VOA" ON APPLICATION, WE HAVE ALREADY STATED OUR BELIEF THAT NO IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IS COMPROMISED BY STATING "USIA" ON VISA APPLICATION SINCE VOA IS PART OF USIA. IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET THE MAN HERE AND TO LET HIM REPORT; IF MFA SAYS ONLY WAY VISA CAN BE ISSUED IS BY DROPPING "VOA" FROM APPLICATION, IT SEEMS TO US WORTH IT TO GO ALONG AT LEAST ON FIRST VOA VISIT. WE WOULD MAKE IT VERY CLEAR TO ALL CONCERNED AT EVERY STAGE THAT APPLICANT WAS VOA CORRESPONDENT, A POINT ALREADY MADE BY PAO IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MFA PRESS OFFICE. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO TEST THE WATER ON THIS QUESTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE BY HAVING FREUND, OR ANOTHER VOA CORRESPONDENT, APPLY FOR VISA TO COVER "CZECHSOLOVAK-AMERICAN ECNONMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES." ANOTHER POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE THE PRAGUE SPRING CULTURAL EVENT IN MAY, WHICH WILL INCLUDE AMERICAN PARTICIPATION.
PERRY

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